

of Italy from Susa on the one side, where he was threatened by Constantine, to Venice on the other, where he was on guard against Licinius. There is a curious reference in one of the authorities to a plan formed by Maxentius of invading Gaul through Rhaetia, — no doubt because Constantine had made the Alpine passes practically unassailable, — while Lactantius tells us that he had drawn every available man from Africa to swell his armies in Italy.

Constantine acted with the extreme rapidity for which he was already famous. He hurried his army down from the Rhine, and was through the passes and attacking the walled city of Susa before Maxentius had certain knowledge of his movements. That he was embarking on an exceedingly hazardous expedition seems to have been recognised by himself and his captains. The author of the Ninth Panegyric says quite bluntly that his principal officers not only muttered their fears in secret, but expressed them openly,* and adds that his councillors and haruspices warned him to desist. A similar campaign had cost Severus his life and had been found too hazardous even by Galerius. Superiority of numbers lay not with him, but with his rival. Constantine was gravely handicapped by the fact that he had to safeguard the Rhine behind him against the Germanic tribes, which he knew would seize the first opportunity to pass the river. Zosimus gives a detailed account of the numbers

* *Non solum tacite mussantibus sed etiam aperU
timentibus.* — * *Pan. Vet.*, ix., 2.

f Zosimus, ii.,
15. 6